



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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KRUG WARNS GEORGIA ON HUNTING VIOLATIONS

"If the State of Georgia persists in its attempt to set a State season for dove shooting which is in conflict with Federal regulations, it will bring a storm of protest from sportsmen in neighboring States," Albert M. Day, director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, warned today.

Director Day's statement followed an announcement by the Georgia State Game and Fish Commission that the State would permit dove shooting during September, which is in conflict with Federal regulations.

Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug in a letter to Gov. Melvin E. Thompson of Georgia, urged him to "take such measures as will eliminate the apparent conflict in dove hunting regulations and wipe out the confusion which may result in all feeling on the part of some citizens of your State."

"May I point out to you that the responsibility for enforcing the Migratory Bird Treaty Act regulations is in my hands," Secretary Krug stated, "and it is essential that there be adequate enforcement of these regulations in Georgia. Unfortunately there has been tacit encouragement of the sportsmen of Georgia to disregard the Federal regulations by a press release apparently issued by the Georgia Commission.

"My fear is that your citizens will be put to needless harassment and possible arrest and trial in Federal courts because of the Commission's action. We do not desire to arrest your good citizens and I have no doubt that many of them will observe and conform to the properly authorized season as set by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act regulations. We feel that others may be misled by the action of the Georgia Commission and its press release in announcing that Georgia Wildlife Rangers would not enforce other than State law with respect to the season. It is to the interest of the sportsmen of Georgia to conform to and with the general pattern of a game bird that is exceedingly important to the Southeastern United States."

"The Fish and Wildlife Service," Director Day declared, "has long urged delay in opening the dove season until October or even later in the Southern States east of the Mississippi River, because of the unsatisfactory status of the mourning doves in these states.

"At its April 26 meeting, the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners recognized the necessity of reducing the total annual kill of these

birds in States where they are so intensely hunted. It recommended that shooting each day of the season should not start until noon. This suggestion was adopted by the Service.

"When the migratory hunting regulations were written this year the Service recommended a shorter dove shooting season. Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Alabama and Louisiana all accepted the Federal regulations. Georgia, alone is discriminating against her neighbors by setting a State season from September 15 to 20 and between December 15 and January 31 in the northern part of the State and from December 1 to January 31 in the remainder of the counties.

"If the sport of dove shooting and wildfowling is to be enjoyed in the future, Federal regulations must be followed. The formula for hunting which was offered the States is not a bureaucratic decree. It is a plan evolved through the cooperative efforts of the States and the Federal government for the purpose of conserving a great natural resource."

Director Day stated that the Service has already sent many additional law enforcement agents into Georgia, prepared to enforce the legal Federal season in the State which lasts from December 18 to January 31, with shooting hours from noon until sunset. "These agents," Mr. Day stated, "will remain in Georgia for an indefinite period."

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